

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.15.20
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
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To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.15.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 6.15.20 7 Cars 5 Trucks 2 Bicyclists 1 Runner 1 Person fishing No School busses

The last time I set out on a driving trip across the country bringing my own food was on June 25, 1984. That day, two newly ordained rabbis set out for California in a very large 25 ft. U-Haul truck from 121st and Broadway. Neither Danny Gordis nor I had any idea what the next 5 days would bring as we made our way from coast to coast. Thrilled that we had a gas tank that held 33 gallons of gas, we were severely freaked out when we discovered that the U-Haul truck got about 3.3 miles to the gallon. In any event, we made it from New York to LA in five days with stops at 4 different places. [Sunday night around 10 PM](#) we stopped outside of Cleveland in Strongsville, Ohio. There the owner of the modest motel where we stayed remarked that "you must be very smart; I have never seen so many books in my life." (Both statements remain very true). We had opened the back of the truck to make sure that nothing had rearranged itself through Pennsylvania. Leaving Cleveland [at 6 AM](#) the next morning, we pulled into my parents' home in Lincoln Nebraska [at around 2 AM](#). My father(zl) remarked that "you boys are going to have to be very careful getting that thing over the mountains in Colorado." We pooh-poohed his remarks since we knew the whole route was on Interstate. The following night, having survived the mountainous passes in Colorado, we pulled into Vail and both benched gomel for having survived the ride down the mountain from the Eisenhower Tunnel to Silverthorne, Colorado. And finally, our final night was in Las Vegas-at the California 6 Hotel. Having paid the man behind the glass booth for the "full night rate", we discovered a highly spartan room with two twin beds and signs throughout it that read "occupancy by more than 6 people at any time is against the law." The trip was a classic, filled with wonderful discussions about the future of the Jewish people, the lives we were going to lead, what the trajectory of our careers was going to be, the upcoming presidential election, books we were reading and coming up with the titles for Danny's sermons at his pulpit. It seemed that his Senior rabbi demanded that every sermon have a title and that Danny submit his titles within the first week of his being there for the remainder of calendar year 1984. Oh, how times have changed. But I digress.....

On Sunday June 7, 2020, Leora, Phyllis and I set out on our own journey across the country. In her new used Toyota Corolla packed to the gills with no room to move, we left our home [at 5:30 AM](#), with our food, good spirits, filled with hope and just a touch of sadness. Having just cocooned together for 3 months, we were also saying goodbye to a treat none of us expected and from which

all of us benefitted. We had never lived with our adult children for any length of time and it is a fascinating and wonderful experience that both Phyllis and I, at least, will treasure. The drive was fairly easy for the first part. Having filled the car with gas at Costco in Eagan on Friday, our first stop for gas was the Costco in Rockford, Illinois. After a lovely, albeit socially distant, lunch with Adina and Josh in a Chicago park, we drove straight towards Youngstown, Ohio. There, having investigated various chains' protocols for cleaning during the pandemic, and having selected the Hilton family of hotels as the best, we checked into the Hampton Inn of Youngstown. It was, by the way, the first time since 1984, that I checked into a hotel with the manager sitting behind a (plexi)glass barrier. We were impressed with their signage, their protocols and the obvious attention to the rooms which we were in that night. They seemed to live up to their messaging. I tell you this because again after three nights at the Hilton Garden Inn at Stony Brook, we felt very comfortable with our research on hotel standards during this time of fear. And having brought our own food with us, we felt that travel—albeit different from before—was possible. And who knew that nowadays, a passenger can even zoom into a bus while driving across Pennsylvania? What a world and mazel tov Susan and David!

The feeling about travel changed [on Thursday night](#). Again, after a lovely, albeit brief, visit with our grandson (and his parents) in Columbus, we drove to Lima, Ohio for the night. It was as if we had driven into the twilight zone. As we drove off the highway towards the Hampton Inn of Lima, signs on restaurants proclaimed that “Inside dining room Open—Come on in.” The hotel appeared to have absolutely no signs encouraging social distancing, no plexiglass at the counter, the coffee urns were on, no one was wearing masks. After three days in New York where masks are required to enter any building and most people were wearing them continuously, this felt very odd. And so I looked to see what could have caused the difference in Ohio [from Sunday](#) night in Youngstown to [Thursday night](#) in Lima. The first thing I looked at was the 2016 election results. Youngstown is in Mahoning county and in 2016 it went for Clinton by a narrow margin. The margin in Youngstown was better but still underperforming for a Democratic candidate. On the other hand, Lima is in Allen County (inappropriately named if you ask me). President Trump defeated Clinton in Allen county 67%-29%. Now there could have been many factors involved for the change in behavior in Ohio [from Sunday night to Thursday night](#). Election results that are nearly 4 years old can hardly be taken as the only reason for the difference between Youngstown and Lima. But if polling numbers are true—and which indicate that most GOP voters believe that resuming “normal” life takes precedence over “concern for health,” then a good test case might well be Allen County in Ohio. As for Phyllis and me, the return to our home [on Friday afternoon](#) signaled that our big summer trip had come to an end and that we are back in our little cocoon. (Thank you, Vicki and David, for a lovely shabbat dinner delivered to our door). Leora will begin her residency, life will continue, and I imagine that my daily walks will be a continuing piece of my summer and maybe into autumn routine. But one thing I know for sure—I am not going back to Allen County Ohio anytime soon.

Morris

Sent by my iPad